



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

MARCH 05 2011

Scripture Story: Genesis 24.

Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chapter 15.

winsome . . . and then some



Photo © 2010 Herrera/Thinkstock

flashlight

"It was a time of anxious thought with [Eliezer]. Important results, not only to his master's household, but to future generations, might follow from the choice he made; and how was he to choose wisely among entire strangers? Remembering the words of Abraham, that God would send His angel with him, he prayed earnestly for positive guidance. In the family of his master he was accustomed to the constant exercise of kindness and hospitality, and he now asked that an act of courtesy might indicate the maiden whom God had chosen" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 172).

keytext

"After she had given him a drink, she said, 'I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking.'"

(Genesis 24:19, NIV)

what do you think?

Rank the following attributes from 1 (most important)

to 10 (least important) in the order you hope to find them in your future spouse.

- ___ Kindness
- ___ Honesty
- ___ Attractiveness
- ___ Contentment
- ___ Optimism
- ___ Selflessness
- ___ Courage
- ___ Self-confidence
- ___ Humility
- ___ Creativity

Why is your first choice so important to you? Who do you know who best embodies that trait? What person in the Bible exhibited this attribute? Would you ever marry a person who did not have this quality? Why or why not?

did you know?

Approximately half of marriages today are still arranged by the parents. Such was the custom in Abraham's day. Abraham was 140 years old (Sarah had died three years earlier) when he arranged for the marriage of his son Isaac. Abraham entrusted the matchmaking to his chief servant, Eliezer. So solemn was this assignment, Eliezer placed his hand under Abraham's thigh to swear that Isaac's wife would not be found among the Canaanites. The thigh was considered the seat of generative power, so to put the hand under a person's thigh was to promise obedience to the one requiring the oath.

INTO THE STORY

"Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the Lord had blessed him in every way. He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, 'Put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.'"

"Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and left."

"Then he prayed, 'O Lord . . . May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.'"

"Before he had

finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. . . . The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

"The servant hurried to meet her and said, 'Please give me a little water from your jar.'"

"Drink, my lord,' she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

"After she had given him a drink, she said, 'I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking.'"

"Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord, saying, 'Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master.'"

"Then Rebekah and her maids got ready and mounted their camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left."

"Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

(Genesis 24:1-4, 10, 12-19, 26, 27, 61, 67, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Read the story to note details that are new to you.

Circle the different people in the story.

Put a *rectangle* around the phrases that capture the main parts of the story.

Underline the verse that you think contains the most important part of the story. Why?

How does this story inform our understanding of modern romance?

What character qualities do you see in:

Abraham?

Eliezer?

Rebekah?

Isaac?

What are the advantages/disadvantages of an arranged marriage?

If this story were to be made into a motion picture, what title would you give it?

punch lines

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” **(Colossians 3:23, 24, NIV).**

“If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles” **(Matthew 5:39-41, NIV).**

“If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married” **(1 Corinthians 7:36, NIV).**

“Honor marriage, and guard the sacredness of sexual intimacy between wife and husband. God draws a firm line against casual and illicit sex” **(Hebrews 13:4, Message).**

“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord” **(Proverbs 18:22, NIV).**

“ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” **(Ephesians 5:31-33, NIV).**

other eyes

“Marriage is adventure, not an achievement.”—David A. Seamands, current

U.S. professor of pastoral ministries.

“The love we have in our youth is superficial compared to the love that an old man has for his old wife.”—20th-century U.S. philosopher Will Durant on

his ninetieth birthday.

Sabbath

The *What Do You Think?* activity at the beginning of this lesson urged you to make choices about what attributes are most important to you in a future spouse. Why did you choose the top three you chose? What do you imagine will be the hardest quality to find in a spouse? Why?

When you think about how your life unites with someone else's, how much do you think it matters that the key qualities in your list are present?

Sunday

As you read *Into the Story*, what three insights did you gain from observing some of the details brought out by the *Out of the Story* questions?

1.

2.

What do you think is the main reason this story is included in the Bible? What do you think God is trying to say to you in this story about love and marriage?

Monday

In this week's lesson Rebekah models the beautiful trait of offering a gesture of kindness and "then some." Read the *Key Text* again and notice how she goes beyond the expected response, as Eliezer had prayed someone would do. Do you believe Eliezer's prayer for someone who exhibited this quality was strange? When you look at the way Bible characters prayed specifically for certain events to occur, how do you feel about praying in a similar way? As you pray today, talk to God about a specific hope you have about your future spouse. Write out your prayer and keep it in a

safe place so you can find it when you are making decisions about marriage.

Tuesday

In this week's *Flashlight* section Ellen White observes Eliezer's earnest desire to be guided by God in choosing a wife for Isaac. The decision was too pivotal for thoughtless choosing. Read the quote from *Patriarchs and Prophets* and notice that the qualities that governed the choice were "kindness" and "hospitality." Why do you think these attributes were so important to Abraham's family? What decisions do you face that might affect the direction of your future? Who do you know today who enjoys a joyful marriage because they made good relationship decisions when they were young? Ask them about the qualities they sought in a marriage partner.

Wednesday

Read the verses listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson and make brief title headings for each verse. Which verse speaks especially to your life today? Why do you think this scripture stands out to you more than the others? As you reflect on how this passage pertains to you, think of a friend you have that might benefit from the same passage, and pray for an opportunity to encourage them this week.

Thursday

If you read chapter 15 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, you will discover wonderful insights into this week's lesson. Make note of the new insights you gain from reading this chapter and how they illuminate the story for you. Also, listen for advice! What timeless principles do you see in the reading that would help you in any age, whether it be in Abraham's time or today?

Insights:

Timeless principles:

Search the Bible for other Bible characters or stories and passages that give insight into the topic of marriage. List the texts in your Bible and read them before you go on a date.

Friday

The experience of marriage and building a God-honoring relationship over the years is one of life's most noble adventures. As stated in the *Punch Lines*: "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord" (Proverbs 18:22, NIV). This is true also for a young woman who would find a good man to marry. God truly intended for our joy to be complete, and part of that joy is experienced in our relationships with others. What aspects of this week's lesson was particularly helpful to you today?

Write a thank-you note to a couple that you know who have had a positive influence on your concept of marriage.

Texts credited to Message are from *The Message*. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets, chapter 15.

*A special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.